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IN THE CLAIMS

Claim 1 (previously amended) A table or counter mat having a composite sheet structure comprising:

a non-slip backing layer;

a top liquid absorbent textile surface; and

an intermediate stabilization and pile support layer joining the backing layer to the textile surface and aiding support of the textile surface, with the textile surface having a pile height less than 7 millimeters adapted for resting cups, mugs or glasses and for retaining an element of absorbency, wherein the resultant mat is readily able to be laundered.

Claim 2 (original) A table or counter mat according to claim 1 wherein the non-slip backing layer is formed from rubber.

Claim 3 (original) A table or counter mat according to claim 2 wherein the non-slip backing layer is formed from a nitrile rubber.

Claim 4 (previously amended) A table or counter mat according to claim 3 wherein the nitrile rubber is in the range of less than 2 mm thick with a density of about 1000 grams per square meter.

Claim 5 (previously amended) A table or counter mat according to claim 3 wherein the intermediate stabilization and pile support layer comprises a heat curable material curable at temperatures greater than 100°C and preferably at about 170°C such that the mat is able to be laundered in hot water.

Claim 6 (original) A table or counter mat according to claim 5 wherein the intermediate layer is formed from a non-woven polyester.

Claim 7 (previously amended) A table or counter mat having a composite sheet structure comprising:

a top textile surface layer;

a non-slip backing layer;

and an intermediate stabilization and support layer aiding joining and support of the top textile surface layer to the non-slip backing layer while allowing the top textile surface layer of the resultant mat to be absorbent;

the non-slip backing layer is formed from a nitrile rubber curable at temperatures greater

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the intermediate stabilization and support layer is formed from a non-woven polyester, and

the top textile surface layer is a non-woven polyester with a pile height substantially in the range of 3 to 7 millimeters, with the intermediate stabilization and support layer and the top textile surface layer combined with the non-slip backing layer forming a top liquid absorbent textile of less than 4 millimeters which is continuous and consistent and maintains relative position for printing a detailed image thereon and maintaining position to display the detailed image.

Claim 8 (previously amended) A table or counter mat according to claim 5 wherein the textile surface includes a textile marking providing a coloring, a print or an advertising message viewable from above.

Claim 9 (previously amended) A table or counter mat according to claim 8 wherein the textile marking is formed by a sublimation textile printing process.

Claim 10 (previously amended) A table or counter mat according to claim 9 wherein the sublimation printing occurs at greater than 100°C and preferably greater than 170°C such that the mat is able to be laundered in hot water.

Claim 11 (previously amended) A table or counter mat according to claim 10 wherein the top liquid absorbent textile surface is formed from a polyester surface with a pile height substantially in the range of 3 to 7 millimeters.

Claim 12 (previously amended) A table or counter mat according to claim 8 wherein the top liquid absorbent textile surface is formed from a tufted nylon cut pile surface.

Claim 13 (previously amended) A table or counter mat according to claim 12 wherein the textile surface has a density of about 600 grams per square meter.

Claim 14 (previously amended) A table or counter mat according to claim 13 wherein the textile marking is formed by an acid dye process.

Claim 15 (previously amended) A table or counter mat readily able to be laundered having a composite sheet structure comprising:

a nitrile rubber non-slip backing layer aiding the mat to lie flat;

a top liquid absorbent polyester textile surface layer having a surface height less than 7 millimeters and preferably less than 2 millimeters to allow resting thereon of cups or glasses or

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wherein the textile surface layer is continuous and consistent so that the textile surface layer substantially maintains relative position for receiving and displaying a detailed image by a textile printing providing a print or advertising message viewable from above.

Claim 16 (previously amended) A method of forming a table or counter mat including:

- a) forming a nitrile rubber sheet material as a backing layer;
- b) forming a top textile surface layer by combining a non-woven polyester fabric with a non-woven polyester stabilization and pile support fabric; and
- c) aligning the top and backing layers and compressing the layered materials by a heated platen for selected time duration, pressure and temperature settings to cure and bond the nitrile rubber backing layer to the top textile surface layer;

wherein the resultant table or counter mat lays flat and is able to support stably a glass or other similar liquid vessel with the table or counter mat being liquid absorbent to absorb any spilled liquid.

Claim 17 (previously amended) A method of forming a table or counter mat according to claim 16 wherein the curing and bonding of the nitrile rubber backing layer to the top textile surface layer occurs at greater than 100°C and preferably greater than 170°C such that the mat is able to be laundered in hot water.

Claim 18 (previously amended) A method of forming a table or counter mat according to claim 16 further including:

providing a sublimation printing process by placing a screen printed or digital image printed paper which carries the required design on the top textile surface layer with print face down and activating a heat platen to press the screen printed or digital image printed paper to the top textile surface layer under a selected heat, pressure and time duration.

Claim 19 (currently amended) A method of forming a table or counter mat including:

- a) forming a nitrile rubber sheet material as a backing layer;
- b) forming a top textile surface layer which is non-tufted and is continuous and has a density and a pile height substantially in the range of 3 to 7 ~~millimetres~~ millimeters able to be printed thereon by sublimation printing;
- c) aligning the top and backing layers;
- d) compressing the aligned materials by a heated platen for a selected time duration.

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layer so that the resultant table or counter mat lays flat and is able to support stably a glass or other similar liquid vessel and the table or counter mat is liquid absorbent to absorb any spilled liquid;

wherein the curing and bonding of the nitrile rubber backing to the top textile surface layer occurs at greater than 100°C and preferably greater than 170°C such that the mat is able to be laundered in hot water;

e) placing a screen printed, offset or digital image print paper which carries a detailed image on the top textile layer surface of the bonded resultant table or counter mat with print face down; and

f) activating a heat platen to press the screen printed, offset or digital image print paper to the top textile surface layer under selected heat, pressure and time duration and at greater than 100°C and preferably greater than 170°C such that the mat is able to be laundered in hot water, with the top supported textile surface layer bonded with the backing layer forming a top liquid absorbent textile of less than 4 millimeters which is continuous and consistent and maintains relative position for printing the detailed image thereon and maintaining position to display the detailed image.

Claim 20 (previously presented) A method of forming a table or counter mat according to claim 19 with the top textile surface layer formed by a non-woven non tufted polyester and an intermediate layer of a non-woven polyester.

Claim 21 (currently amended) A table or counter mat having a composite sheet structure comprising:

a top textile surface layer;

a non-slip backing layer;

and an intermediate stabilization and support layer aiding joining and support of the top textile surface layer to the non-slip backing layer while allowing the top textile surface layer of the resultant mat to be absorbent;

the non-slip backing layer is formed from a nitrile rubber in the range of less than 2 mm thick with a density of about 1000 -1200 grams per square meter and curable at temperatures greater than 100°C such that the mat is able to be laundered in hot water;

the intermediate stabilization and support layer and the top textile surface layer are a

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the top textile surface layer are combined with the non-slip backing layer forms a top liquid absorbent textile of less than 4 millimeters which is continuous and consistent and maintains relative position for printing a detailed image thereon and maintaining position to display the detailed image.

Claim 22 (previously presented) The mat according to claim 21 with the non-slip backing layer being curable at temperatures greater than 170°C.

Claim 23 (currently amended) A table or counter mat having a composite sheet structure comprising:

a top fabric layer;

a non-slip backing layer;

a part of the top fabric layer able to be joined to the non-slip backing layer while allowing the top fabric layer of the resultant mat to be absorbent;

the non-slip backing layer is formed from a nitrile rubber in the range of less than 2 mm thick with a density of about 1000 -1200 grams per square meter and curable at temperatures greater than 100°C such that the mat is able to be laundered in hot water;

the top fabric layer being a ~~knitted~~ polyester ~~fabrie~~ surface which when combined with the non-slip backing layer forms a top liquid absorbent textile of less than 4 ~~millimetres~~ millimeters which is continuous and consistent and maintains relative position for printing a detailed image thereon and maintaining position to display the detailed image.

Claim 24 (previously presented) The mat according to claim 23 with the non-slip backing layer being curable at temperatures greater than 170°C.

Claim 25 (currently amended) The mat according to claim 24, wherein the top fabric layer includes a ~~microknitted~~ polyester ~~fabrie~~ surface.

Claim 26 (currently amended) The mat according to claim 24, wherein the top fabric layer includes a ~~warp-knitted-plush~~ polyester ~~fabrie~~ surface.

Claim 27 (canceled)

Claim 28 (previously presented) A table or counter mat comprising, in combination: a non-slip backing layer; and a top liquid absorbent polyester textile layer joined to the non-slip backing layer to form a composite sheet structure which is readily able to be laundered, with the top liquid absorbent textile layer having a density of about 200 to 600 grams per square meter to

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stably support cups, mugs or glasses, to absorb any spilled liquid from the cups, mugs or glasses supported thereon, and to provide a message communication covering with clarity.

Claim 29 (previously presented) The table or counter mat according to claim 28 with the non-slip backing layer having a thickness, with the top liquid absorbent textile layer having a height, with a ratio of the height of the top liquid absorbent textile layer to the thickness of the non-slip backing layer being about 10 to 1.

Claim 30 (previously presented) The table or counter mat according to claim 29 with the thickness of the non-slip backing layer being less than about 2 mm.

Claim 31 (previously presented) The table or counter mat according to claim 30 with the top liquid absorbent textile layer being a tufted synthetic yarn cut pile surface with a pile height of about 6 mm and a pile weight of about 600-620 grams per square meter.

Claim 32 (previously presented) The table or counter mat according to claim 31 with the thickness of the non-slip backing layer being about 1 mm.

Claim 33 (previously presented) The table or counter mat according to claim 32 with the non-slip backing layer is formed from rubber having a density of about 1000 grams per square meter.

Claim 34 (previously presented) The table or counter mat according to claim 33 further comprising, in combination: an intermediate stabilization layer joining the non-slip backing layer to the top liquid absorbent textile layer.

Claim 35 (previously presented) The table or counter mat according to claim 34 with the intermediate stabilization layer formed of synthetic thermally bonded non-woven fabric.

Claim 36 (previously presented) The table or counter mat according to claim 35 with the intermediate stabilization layer having a density of 110 grams per square meter and a tensile strength of 190 Newtons per 5 cm with a maximum elongation of plus 30% and a tear strength of 140 Newtons, with the intermediate stabilization layer formed of a material curable at temperatures greater than 100°C such that the composite sheet structure can be laundered in hot water.

Claim 37 (previously presented) The table or counter mat according to claim 28 with the top liquid absorbent textile layer being a tufted synthetic yarn cut pile surface with a pile height of about 6 mm and a pile weight of about 600-620 grams per square meter

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Claim 38 (previously presented) The table or counter mat according to claim 30 with the top liquid absorbent textile layer being a synthetic, scrim supported, fiber needlefelt having a density of about 500 grams per square meter.

Claim 39 (previously presented) The table or counter mat according to claim 38 with the thickness of the non-slip backing layer being about 1 mm.

Claim 40 (previously presented) The table or counter mat according to claim 39 with the non-slip backing layer having a density of 1000 grams per square meter.

Claim 41 (previously presented) The table or counter mat according to claim 28 with the thickness of the non-slip backing layer being about 1 mm.

Claim 42 (previously presented) A table or counter mat comprising, in combination: a non-slip backing layer; and a top liquid absorbent textile layer joined to the non-slip backing layer to form a composite sheet structure, with the top layer absorbent textile layer having a height, with the non-slip backing layer having a thickness, with a ratio of the height of the top liquid absorbent textile layer to the thickness of the non-slip backing layer being about 1 to 1.

Claim 43 (previously presented) The table or counter mat according to claim 42 with the thickness of the non-slip backing layer being less than about 2 mm.

Claim 44 (previously presented) The table or counter mat according to claim 42 with the thickness of the non-slip backing layer being about 1 mm.

Claim 45 (previously presented) The table or counter mat according to claim 44 with the top liquid absorbent textile layer being a surface with a pile height of about 2 mm.

Claim 46 (previously presented) A table or counter mat according to claim 44 with the top liquid absorbent textile layer formed from a polyester surface with a pile height substantially in the range of 3 to 7 millimeters.

Claim 47 (previously presented) A table or counter mat comprising, in combination: a non-slip backing layer; and a top layer joined to the non-slip backing layer to form a composite sheet for resting cups, mugs or glasses on the top layer, with the top layer consisting of synthetic textile surface of a high density capable of stably supporting such cups, mugs or glasses resting on the top layer and being liquid absorbent to absorb any liquid spilled from such cups, mugs or glasses resting on the top layer.

Claim 48 (currently amended) The table or counter mat according to claim 47 with the

top liquid absorbent textile layer

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Claim 49 (previously presented) The table or counter mat according to claim 47 with the thickness of the non-slip backing layer being less than about 2 mm.